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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 12, 2005

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U.S. CHARGES 11 MEMBERS OF BRONX HOME INVASION CREW WITH
ROBBERY, WEAPONS OFFENSES, NARCOTICS CONSPIRACY AND HOMICIDES

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Commissioner of the New York City Police Department, and ANTHONY PLACIDO, the Special Agent in Charge of the New York Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration, announced the unsealing in Manhattan federal court on late Monday of an Indictment charging 11 individuals with robbery, murder, firearms and narcotics offenses stemming from their alleged participation in a robbery crew that targeted narcotics dealers in the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens.

The Indictment names the following defendants as being members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization: FRANKLIN MINAYA, a/k/a "Frank," a/k/a "Hermano," ALBERTO CASTELLANO, a/k/a "Christian," SILVIO GUERRERO, a/k/a "Don Silvio," LEONARDO PIÑA, a/k/a "Leo," a/k/a "Leito," a/k/a "Andre Puentes," REYNALDO PIÑA, a/k/a "Regito," PEDRO MORETA, a/k/a "Alejandro," JULIO CESAR RODRIGUEZ, a/k/a "Junior," ANGEL OLIVERIA, a/k/a "Manolin," LUIS

GOMEZ, a/k/a "Moreno," BERNABE MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Ben," a/k/a "Antonio," and HARIS JAVIER, a/k/a "Harry." In addition, LEONARDO PIÑA and REYNALDO PIÑA are charged with the September 1, 1997, murder of Leonel Pena during the course of one of the robberies, in the vicinity of 620 West 152nd Street in Manhattan. FRANKLIN MINAYA, JULIO CESAR RODRIGUEZ and LUIS GOMEZ are charged with the April 3, 2001, murder of Joaquin Rodriguez during the course of a robbery in the vicinity of 2420 Bronx Park East in the Bronx. FRANKLIN MINAYA, ALBERTO CASTELLANO and SILVIO GUERRERO are charged with the May 1, 2001, murder of Raul Ferreira during the course of a robbery in the vicinity of 1940 East Tremont Avenue in the Bronx.

According to the Indictment - S3 01 Cr. 619 (VM) - the Freeman Street Robbery Organization executed numerous coordinated, carefully planned home invasion robberies, primarily of narcotics traffickers, in the New York metropolitan area. Members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization allegedly worked with individuals referred to in Spanish as "*santeros*," or in English as "tipsters," who have inside information about the operations of various narcotics traffickers in the New York metropolitan area. The *santeros* provided this inside information to members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization so that they could plan and carry out robberies of the targeted narcotics traffickers at times when they were believed to be in possession of large quantities of drugs and/or drug proceeds, it was charged.

According to the Indictment, members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization would conduct surveillance of the targeted robbery location in advance of the time that they planned to commit the actual robbery in order to verify the credibility of the information received from the *santero*, to make arrangements for the equipment and personnel necessary to gain entry into the targeted locations, and to generally familiarize themselves with the target locations to maximize the chances of success on the day the robbery was carried out. After receiving information from a *santero*, members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization would assemble at various locations, such as a parking garage located at 1038 Freeman Street in the Bronx or an apartment located at 1950 East Tremont Avenue, Apt. 1D in the Bronx, in order to plan and coordinate in advance of the robbery, according to the charges. On the day that a robbery was carried out, it was charged, members of the Organization typically would carry firearms in vehicles with traps, or hidden compartments, to the target location. Among the types of vehicles allegedly frequently used by members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization were vans, which could accommodate numerous passengers and equipment, such as sledgehammers and other tools, which were sometimes needed to gain entry to an apartment through a door or window.

As set forth in the Indictment, before a robbery was

actually carried out, certain members of the Organization were assigned the role of gaining entry to a target location, while others were assigned to act as lookouts outside of the location. Participants who were to enter locations usually carried guns and wore gloves to reduce the likelihood that they would leave fingerprints at the scene. Lookouts also allegedly frequently carried police radio scanners to the robberies in order to monitor whether police were responding to the vicinity of a robbery. During the execution of the robberies, members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization typically used crowbars and harnesses, among other tools, to gain entry into the homes of their intended victims, it was charged. During some of the robberies, members of the Organization impersonated police in order to confuse and intimidate their victims and to facilitate the commission of the robberies, according to the Indictment. Alternative means of entry were also allegedly used, and certain members of the Organization developed particularized skills that facilitated successful home invasions. For example, because many of the Organization's targeted locations were residential apartments within large apartment complexes in the New York metropolitan area, certain members of the Organization developed the ability to rappel from the rooftop of an apartment building to the window of a targeted apartment through which entry could be made, it was charged. This

skill enabled the Freeman Street Robbery Organization to enter the target locations by surprise. Such entry was frequently made during the night, when people within the targeted locations were asleep, it was charged.

As alleged, when residents were found within a targeted location, members of the Organization regularly subdued them and restrained their limbs using wire coat hangers or telephone cord, among other things. In order to extract information from robbery victims about the storage location of narcotics and narcotics proceeds within an apartment, members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization frequently physically assaulted, and threatened to assault, the victims, it was charged. During the course of some of the robberies, on at least several occasions, victims were shot, beaten or killed by members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization, according to the charges. On a regular basis, victims were allegedly threatened with violence and held at gunpoint during the robberies by members of the Organization.

The Indictment alleges that members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization robbed their victims of hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, most of it believed to be narcotics proceeds, and other items of value, which the members then shared among themselves. In addition, the robberies yielded multiple kilograms

of cocaine and heroin, as well as other narcotics, including marijuana. After robbing their victims of those narcotics, members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization fled the scene of the robbery, reassembling at a distant location to divide the proceeds of their crime, it was charged. When a robbery yielded narcotics, either (1) a designated member of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization would sell the narcotics to a narcotics distributor and divide the proceeds among the participants in the robbery or (2) members of the Freeman Street Robbery Organization would divide up the narcotics and individually sell the drugs to narcotics distributors, it was charged.

On June 5, 2001, JULIO CESAR RODRIGUEZ was arrested and charged with robbery, weapons and homicide offenses. On May 24, 2002, FRANKLIN MINAYA was arrested and charged with robbery, weapons and homicide offenses. On July 13, 2004, LUIS GOMEZ was arrested and charged with robbery and weapons offenses. On November 19, 2004, ALBERTO CASTELLANO was arrested and charged with robbery and weapons offenses. On January 9, 2005, PEDRO MORETA, BERNABE MARTINEZ and HARIS JAVIER were arrested on the Indictment. On January 11, 2005, REYNALDO PIÑA was arrested on the Indictment. RODRIGUEZ, MINAYA, GOMEZ, CASTELLANO, MORETA, MARTINEZ, JAVIER and REYNALDO PIÑA have all been detained pending trial. All of the

defendants, except for LEONARDO PIÑA, SILVIO GUERRERO and ANGEL OLIVERIA, who are fugitives, will be arraigned on the superseding Indictment before a Magistrate Judge. The case has been assigned to United States District Judge VICTOR MARRERO, who has scheduled a status conference for January 21, 2005 at 10:30 a.m.

Set forth below are the defendants and the maximum potential sentence and potential mandatory sentence each defendant faces:

DEFENDANT	MAXIMUM POTENTIAL SENTENCE	POTENTIAL MANDATORY SENTENCE
FRANKLIN MINAYA	Death	142 years
ALBERTO CASTELLANO	Death	117 years
SILVIO GUERRERO	Death	17 years
LEONARDO PIÑA	Death	10 years
REYNALDO PIÑA	Death	17 years
PEDRO MORETA	Life	92 years
JULIO CESAR RODRIGUEZ	Life	92 years
ANGEL OLIVERIA	Life	17 years
LUIS GOMEZ	Death	42 years
BERNABE MARTINEZ	Life	10 years
HARIS JAVIER	Life	10 years

Mr. KELLEY praised the investigative efforts of the New York City Police Department, Bronx Homicide Squad, the New York

State Police and the Drug Enforcement Administration's REDRUM Group, T-32, who have jointly investigated the case.

Assistant United States Attorneys LAURIE A. KORENBAUM and JOSHUA GOLDBERG are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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